LPG Distribution System in Assam

414. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of agencies entrusted with the work of LPG distribution in Assam;

(b) the number of LPG issued to them for distribution;

(c) the district-wise number of additional connections provided by them during the last five years; and

(d) the details of the new connections and new agencies to be sanctioned in each district of the State during the next five years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) As on 1.10.1998, there were 144 LPG dealerships in Assam with 4.90 lakhs customer population.

(c) During the last 5 years i.e. 93-94 to 97-98, 1,95,841 connections were released in Assam.

, (d) 69 LPG distributorships have been included in the LPG marketing plan 1996—98 and supplementary marketing plan 1996—98 for Assam. Government has recently announced clearing of entire waiting list in the hilly areas including A.ssam. LPG connections are planned to be released across the counter on demand from 1.4.1999 onwards in Assam.

Oil Exploration by Private Agencies

415. SHRI AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to offer about 48 oil exploration blocks for bidding by private bidders:

(b) if so, the number of these blocks situated in Gujarat, Maharashtra and other States; and

(c) what is the estimated reserve of oil & gas available in these blocks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) Under the New Exploration Licensing Policy; 48 exploration blocks have been offered for bidding to both private sector and public sector companies on terms that provide a level playing field to investors.

(b) The exploration blocks include 10 onland, 26 shallow water offshore and 12 deep water offshore blocks. Of these, 2 blocks are in Gujarat Offshore and 4 blocks in Maharashtra Offshore. The State-wise break-up of the 10 onland blocks is as follows:—

1. Arunachal Pradesh	— 1
2. West Bengal	— *1*
3. U.P.	—2
4. Rajasthan	—*A*

(c) The reserves can be estimated only after discovery of oil and gas is made.

Drilling by ONGC in West Bengal

416. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) number of wells drilled by ONGC so far in West Bengal (Off-Shore and On-Shore);

(b) number of wells where drilling could not be completed satisfactorily/in totality specifying such wells alongwith the reasons for abandoning the same;

(c) location of the wells which had shown indication of Hydrocarbon during drilling/testing;

(d) in case the drilled wells could not be completed in totality whether the locations served the purpose of test drilling; and

(e) if not, the reasons why further drilling were not undertaken in surrounding areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (d) Out of the 36 (31 On-Shore and 5 Off-Shore) wells drilling by ONGC in West Bengal, geological objective could not be achieved in one case, i.e., Bodra 1, due to technical reasons. Two wells, viz., Ichapur-1 and Gold Green-1 in onland Bengal, gave indications and shows of hydrocarbon, during drilling/testing.

(e) Well Bodra 2 was drilled in the surrounding areas of Bodra 1.

Setting up of LNG Terminal at Haldia, West Bengal

417. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1959 given in the Rajya Sabha on 16th December, 1998 and state:

(a) whether Government of West 3engal has sought the support of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas in setting up of a L.N.G. terminal at Haldia;

(b) whether the State Government has offered to take part in equity for setting up of such a project at Haldia; and

(c) if so, the response of Government to this offer, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE. MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Import of LNG is on the OGL and does not require licence from the Government. Currently, there is no proposal from any of the parties to establish LNG terminal at Haldia.

Lowering of Diesel Price

418. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: SHRI AKHILESH DAS:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether as a New Year gift, Government had decided to lower the diesel prices in tune with the fall in global oil prices;

(b) if so, the extent of reduction affected; and

(c) whether the prices of petrol and other petroleum products were also proportionately reduced, if so, to what extent and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) and (b) Government announced a comprehensive package to end the oil pool deficit on September 1, 1997. The Government also decided that henceforth the price of HSD ' would be on import parity basis. Accordingly, the ex-storage point price of HSD has been revised as under:

Effective dates	Ex-storage point price (excluding excise duty etc.) Rs/KL
07.11.97	7918.04
25.12.97	7996.84
01.03.98	7839.24
04.04.98	7645.47
20.05.98	7536.89
09.01.99	6722.37